

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 00831 171916Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
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R 171859Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9565
INFO EMBASSY BONN 1791
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RUFHDSAMEMBASSY DUBLIN 5128
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION OECD PARIS
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, UK
SUBJECT: COURT INJUNCTION AGAINST POSTAL WORKERS UNION
MAY HAVE TAKEN THE STEAM OUT OF BRITISH BOYCOTT

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PAGE 02 LONDON 00831 171916Z

REF: LONDON 0715

1. BRITISH TRADE UNION PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD-WIDE
BOYCOTT AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA CALLED BY THE ICFTU HAS BEEN
DEALT A SEVERE BLOW BY THE ISSUANCE OF A TEMPORARY COURT
INJUNCTION FORBIDDING POSTAL WORKERS FROM CUTTING MAIL
AND TELEPHONIC AND TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH SOUTH

AFRICA. THE INJUNCTION, WHICH REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL TOMORROW (JANUARY 18), WILL BE OBEYED BY THE POSTAL UNIONS. A POSTAL UNION LEADER TOLD US THAT REGARDLESS OF THE LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WAKE OF THE INJUNCTION, IT HAS MADE AN EFFECTIVE BOYCOTT IN BRITAIN UNLIKELY.

2. THE INJUNCTION WAS ISSUED AFTER A SPECIAL SATURDAY HEARING OF THE APPEAL COURT, FOLLOWING AN APPEAL BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FREEDOM, A RIGHT-WING ORGANIZATION, WHICH HAD UNSUCCESSFULLY SOUGHT THE INJUNCTION FROM THE HIGH COURT ON FRIDAY (JANUARY 14). THE THREE-JUDGE APPEAL COURT, IN A UNANIMOUS DECISION, REPRIMANDED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, SAM SILKIN, FOR REFUSING TO CONSENT TO THE HIGH COURT INJUNCTION. THE LAW ON WHICH THE INJUNCTION WAS BASED IS SECTION 58 OF THE POST OFFICE ACT WHICH FORBIDS THE WILLFUL DELAY OR DETENTION OF MAIL OR THE INTERFERENCE WITH A POSTAL OFFICER'S EFFORT TO DISPATCH ITAM (THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL APPEAR IN THE APPEAL COURT TOMORROW TO EXPLAIN HIS POSITION.)

3. THE PLANNED COMMUNICATIONS BLOCKADE BY POSTAL WORKERS IS REALLY THE MOST POTENT OF THE BOYCOTT ACTIONS PLANNED BY UNIONS IN BRITAIN. EVEN THOUGH SOME OF THE OTHER UNIONS SUCH AS THE TRANSPORT WORKERS DECIDE TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR BOYCOTT ACTIONS, THE INJUNCTION MAY HAVE TAKEN THE STEAM OUT OF THE OVERALL BRITISH ANTI-APARTHEID EFFORT. NORMAN STAGG, ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE UNION OF POST OFFICE WORKERS, TOLD US LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LONDON 00831 171916Z

PRIVATELY THAT TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, THE POSTAL BOYCOTT APPEARS TO BE DEAD, EVEN IF -- AS APPEARS DOUBTFUL NOW -- THE INJUNCTION IS LIFTED TOMORROW. STAGG'S REASONING IS THAT BY THE TIME THE MATTER WERE TO BE SORTED OUT, THE WEEK OF ANTI-APARTHEID ACTION IN BRITAIN WOULD BE ESSENTIALLY OVER. ON THE OTHER HAND, STAGG FEELS THAT THE ENORMOUS PUBLICITY ABOUT THE BOYCOTT HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION SHARPLY IN BRITAIN ON SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIALIST POLICIES.

4. CONSERVATIVES HAVE BEEN VERY CRITICAL OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REFUSAL TO INTERVENE IN SUPPORT OF THE INJUNCTION, BUT THE "FINANCIAL TIMES" NOTES TODAY (JANUARY 17): "THE CONSERVATIVE ATTACK MAY BE INHIBITED, HOWEVER, BY THE HEATH GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO ACT IN COMPARABLE SITUATIONS IN 1973". THE CASE HAS RESULTED IN CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ABOUT ITS CONSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS. (AND, AS A NOT UNIMPORTANT SIDELIGHT OF THE MATTER. THERE IS SOME CONCERN IN POSTAL UNION CIRCLES THAT THE FAILURE OF

THE BOYCOTT COULD INHIBIT NORMAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY
POSTAL UNIONS IN THE EVENT OF WAGE DISPUTES IN THE
FUTURE.)

ARMSTRONG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COURT DECISIONS, BOYCOTTS, POSTAL SERVICE, COMMUNICATION LINES, LABOR UNIONS
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
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Subject: COURT INJUNCTION AGAINST POSTAL WORKERS UNION MAY HAVE TAKEN THE STEAM OUT OF BRITISH BOYCOTT LIMITED
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TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
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